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Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the review of the effectiveness of military information management in United Nations peacekeeping operations

Summary

Comprehensive and effective information management is critical for informed decision-making in peacekeeping operations, especially under a mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, whereby volatile situations require prompt and thorough collection and analysis of military information to ensure security and success. While acknowledging progress in joint information management in peacekeeping operations, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) encourages the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to expedite the promulgation of relevant policy, including the role and composition of Joint Mission Analysis Cells.

OIOS noted that the assets needed for effective information management are available in peacekeeping operations but require focused configuration and organization. To improve staff skills in information management, peacekeeping operations should develop a specific order of battle for existing staff functions and standardize training in information management. In particular, more coordination between the force and civilian elements in public information is required.

With the increase in security risks, troop-contributing countries are under pressure to provide information to their contingents, sometimes independently of the peacekeeping operation. OIOS considers this to be counterproductive and believes that formal institutional mechanisms should be set up for passing information from

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troop-contributing countries to peacekeeping operations, including for inter-mission information-sharing.

Since the process of setting up credible information sources and developing efficient analysis and dissemination systems takes time, peacekeeping operations need more backstopping by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations during the deployment phase. It is also necessary to adequately equip peacekeeping operations with new technology for information collection and analysis, especially in the areas of communications monitoring, electronic countermeasures and information security. While commending the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for establishing best practices focal points in peacekeeping operations, OIOS encourages wider dissemination and use of lessons learned in the field regarding the management of military information.

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I. Introduction

1. The history of United Nations peacekeeping includes failures that could have been avoided if there was a stronger mandate for collecting military information, analysing it expeditiously and thoroughly in the political context and acting decisively on the basis of such informed analyses. The killing of nine peacekeepers in Côte d'Ivoire in November 2004 and eight peacekeepers in an ambush in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in February 2005 are examples of such failures. Both incidents are a grim reminder of the critical importance of information in peacekeeping and the fatal consequences of failure to obtain accurate and timely information.

2. The conduct of peacekeeping at times calls for the decisive and measured use of force. As noted in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, "rules of engagement should be sufficiently robust and not force United Nations contingents to cede the initiative to their attackers" (A/55/305-S/2000/809, para. 49). In this context, the need for precise and comprehensive military information is dramatically greater than that of a traditional peacekeeping operation monitoring a demilitarized zone. Indeed, the greatest value of information in peacekeeping is its potential to prevent or predict impending threats, thereby obviating or minimizing the use of force. The changing complexity of peacekeeping also entails more effective collaboration and coordination between military and civilian components of peacekeeping operations in managing risks.

3. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) assessed the effectiveness of information management by the military component of peacekeeping operations in terms of reducing operational and security risks and enhancing mission performance. OIOS also examined the information management capability of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and its effectiveness in mission planning and advance mission performance in the field. While OIOS largely focused on military information management, it was reviewed in the context of an overall mission information management framework. The report addresses all aspects of the information management spectrum, including backstopping support provided by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at Headquarters, application of lessons learned and best practices and issues of inter-mission information-sharing.

4. The exercise comprised the desk review of United Nations official documents, mission reports, internal documentation of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, relevant studies and analyses, including academic papers and case studies; interviews at the Department at Headquarters; analysis of 166 responses to 350 electronic questionnaires sent to all peacekeeping operations; and field visits to five peacekeeping operations. OIOS greatly appreciates the cooperation extended to it by the Department both at Headquarters and in the field, and the present report incorporates the Department's comments of 5 December 2005 on a draft version of the report.

II. Role of information management in contemporary peacekeeping

A. Intelligence operations are integral to peacekeeping

5. OIOS noted that 7 of the 10 missions established after 1999 were operating under a mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations (the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB), United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS)) entailing peace enforcement. Peacekeepers operating under a Chapter VII mandate generally have four main information requirements, three of which must be met before they deploy to the mission. They include background information about the conflict in its historical context; the military and humanitarian situation; and climatic and geographic information, including the condition of the infrastructure. Once on the ground, they need a comprehensive and current information database on potential threats to the peacekeeping operation and a system for the prompt and reliable collection and dissemination of information on known, emerging and unforeseen threats. OIOS observed how these requirements are accomplished in various missions. In MONUC, for example, where the situation remains tense and volatile, the United Nations operational commanders need strong intelligence support to determine how the designs of belligerents and the political dynamics could affect the mission.

6. OIOS noted the general perception that the term "intelligence" has negative connotations and that "military information" is used as a euphemism. An intelligence officer therefore becomes a military information officer, intelligence summaries become military information summaries and so forth. In essence, these are merely cosmetic changes that do not alter the vital importance of the intelligence process in which information from diverse sources, available in many languages and media (oral, written and imagery), is deliberately and consistently collected, processed, analysed and presented to decision-makers in order to reduce uncertainty and suggest alternatives in making an unstable situation more manageable. OIOS believes that there is more to gain from explicitly acknowledging the vital importance of "intelligence" for successful peacekeeping than from continuing to maintain this term's negative connotation.

B. Open-source intelligence is a force multiplier

7. OIOS noted that information management in peacekeeping is highly powerful and effective when it relies exclusively on open sources of information, the delivery of open-source intelligence and overt action. Under these conditions, information management is incontestably legal and ethical under all applicable rules of law, including those of the host country, cultural and religious tenets and customs. Thus, information management in peacekeeping operations could be defined as "the use of open-source intelligence to understand, shape and dominate the knowledge terrain in the mission area". It is therefore a force multiplier and should be available to every mission at all levels of command, along with the requisite skills for its application.

For example, OIOS noted that in a typical traditional peacekeeping mission such as the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), in which the peacekeepers' role is to maintain peace by separating contending sovereign and disciplined military forces who answer to a recognized chain of command, the intelligence task is mainly to collect information on force dispositions and troop movements. Although this can be accomplished from static observation posts using basic communication and reporting procedures, there is a need for further analysis of the information in order to understand the implications in the context of the broader political and security environment.

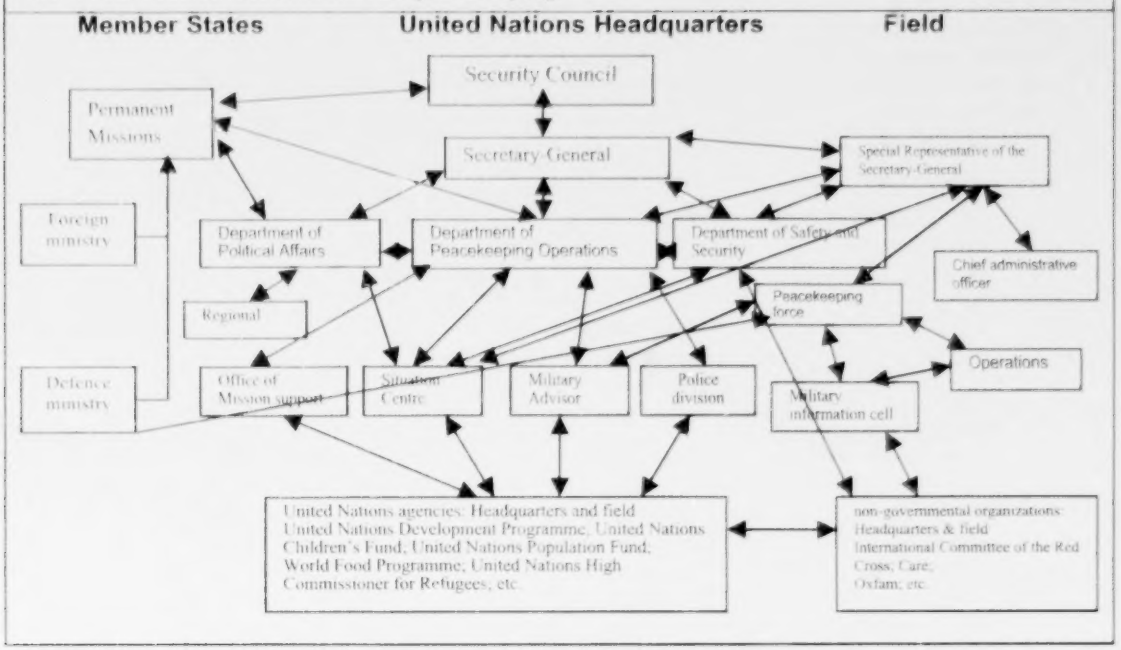
8. In complex multidimensional missions, notably MONUC, UNOCI and MINUSTAH, where the mission is to provide a secure environment for local communities and to rebuild their shattered societies, it is critical to fully understand the groups and individuals who threaten those communities. As pointed out by the Secretary-General, the peacekeeping force must gather and analyse information on spoilers who are bent on derailing the transition process (see S/2004/1034, para. 31). This may entail the establishment of an extensive information collection network and a system for analysis and processing. Clearly, then, the requirement for information management exists in all peacekeeping missions, but the size and composition of the management entity may vary depending on the mandate, size of the force and structure of the mission.

C. Mission-wide collaboration is essential for information management

9. The character of peacekeeping has become more multifaceted over the years. In MONUC, MINUSTAH and UNMIL, for instance, the scope of peacekeeping involves election supervisory personnel and large police formations in order to ensure the recognition of democratic institutions, restore the rule of law and combat crime and corruption. Their mandates accommodate the protection of human rights, the welfare of refugees and displaced persons and the facilitation of economic rehabilitation. This expansion of peacekeeping operation mandates brought with it a multitude of new actors not usually present in earlier traditional missions, requiring closer coordination between military and civilian elements and the effective sharing of information at all levels. Besides cooperation on security, the activities of any one element often directly affect the operation and output of other elements, thus creating a complex web of information flows in the mission.

10. The complexity of information flows in peacekeeping, as understood by OIOS, is reflected in figure I. It appears to be an excessively complex and tangled network that, at times, might have difficulty in functioning coherently. Some essential information may be lost in this complexity, while the tendency towards informal communication may prevent some actors from obtaining vital information. OIOS sees a need for introducing more streamlined formal mechanisms to make information flows more effective.

Figure I
Main actors and information flows in peacekeeping

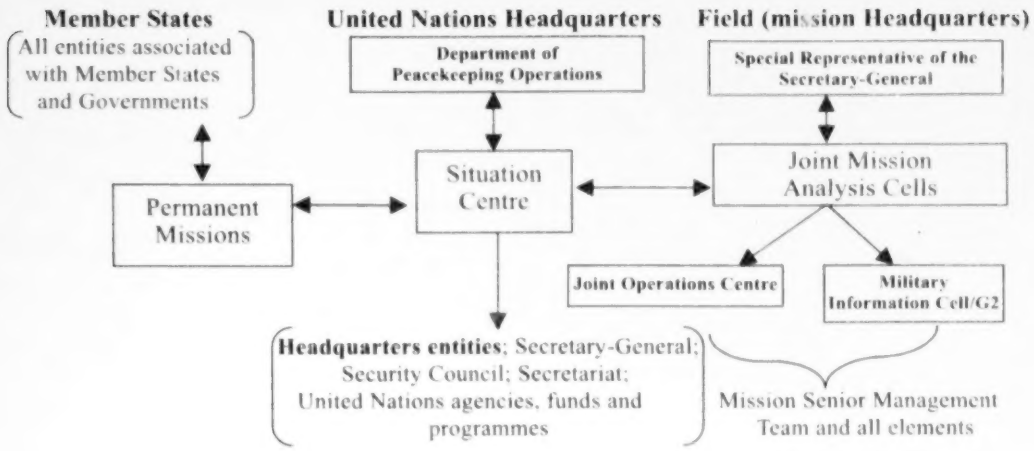


III. Organization for information management in peacekeeping

A. Joint Mission Analysis Cells can streamline information flow in peacekeeping operations

11. OIOS noted with satisfaction the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to simplify the flow of information in peacekeeping by establishing integrated, central information collation and processing centres at the mission level by conceptualizing a Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC) as a multidisciplinary entity that analyses information from all sources and provides strategic information and assessments to senior mission management to assist in decision-making. OIOS observed that in seven missions (MINUSTAH, MONUC, ONUB, UNAMSIL, UNMIL, UNMIS and UNOCI) a JMAC type of organization has already been established. As the locus for information management at the mission level, a JMAC should enable the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to streamline the information flow as depicted in figure 2.

Figure 2
Simplified information flow diagram


Member States
All entities associated with Member States and Governments
United Nations Headquarters
Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Field (mission Headquarters)
Special Representative of the Secretary-General
Permanent Missions
Situation Centre
Joint Mission Analysis Cells
Joint Operations Centre
Military Information Cell/G2
Headquarters entities; Secretary-General; Security Council; Secretariat; United Nations agencies, funds and programmes
Mission Senior Management Team and all elements

12. OIOS noted, however, variations in the structure and operational concept of established JMACs in different missions. In MONUC, for example, the JMAC is currently under the Division of Political Affairs and is staffed by three Political Affairs officers, one United Nations civilian police officer and two military personnel seconded from the force's military information cell (G2) branch. A concept paper has been developed for the JMAC in MONUC to fall directly under the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, reporting through the Chef de Cabinet, but this is yet to be implemented. In ONUB and UNMIL, the JMAC is still very much a military cell under the Force Commander, with no civilian staff, ostensibly because the relevant posts are not budgeted.

13. The data in table 1 on the JMAC composition and structure in seven missions reveals variations in staffing levels and a lack of consistency in the representation of key mission elements. OIOS noted some discrepancy in the data, as illustrated by the figures in parentheses, which represent the current strength as verified during the field visits to MONUC and UNMIS compared to information at the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at Headquarters. In the opinion of OIOS, this discrepancy reflects the constant changes in the structure of a JMAC arising from an absence of clear policy and guidance for JMACs. OIOS also noted that the Department's guidelines and directives to peacekeeping operations for information management may need further strengthening. For example, the Force Commander's policy directive for MINUSTAH makes reference to the establishment of a JMAC but makes no reference as to where guidelines for its structure and composition may be obtained.

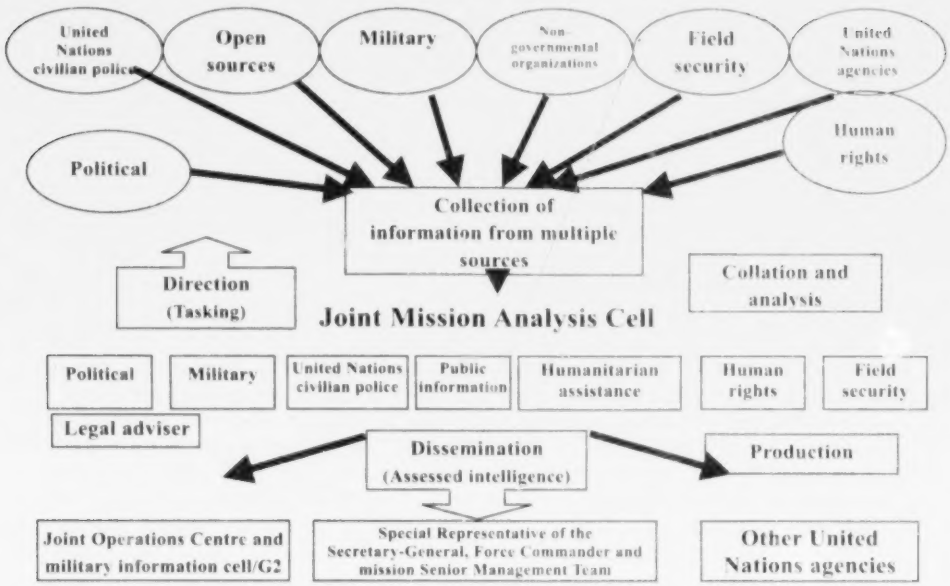
Table 1
Composition of Joint Mission Analysis Cells

Mission	*Military posts*	*United Nations civilian police*	*Civilian posts*
MINUSTAH	5	4	3
MONUC	3 (2)	- (1)	10 (3)
ONUB	11	—	—
UNAMSIL	7	—	—
UNMIS	8 (6)	1 (2)	4 (5)
UNMIL	15	1	2
UNOCI	10	—	6

14. In this regard, OIOS noted with satisfaction that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has established a working group led by the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit and comprising staff from the Military Division, the Office of Operations, the Situation Centre, the Office of Mission Support, the Department of Safety and Security and the Department of Political Affairs, to develop a policy for the concept and structure of JMACs. OIOS noted that at the time of review, the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs were not yet members of the working group, but an invitation had been extended for their participation.

15. In the opinion of OIOS, for optimum effectiveness, the JMAC should reflect the composition of the mission and ideally should be headed by a relatively permanent appointee to maintain institutional knowledge. In addition, to maintain the JMAC profile as an all-source analysis centre focusing on the strategic information requirements of the mission's leadership, it is essential that it function directly under the Special Representative of the Secretary-General or head of mission and have a legal advisory capability for providing assessments to senior mission management to assist in decision-making in areas that may involve various issues, such as environmental or private property. The systemic process cycle of a fully functional and multidisciplinary JMAC should operate as shown in figure 3 below. This operational architecture enables emphasis to be placed on an integrated approach to strategic analysis and the dissemination of assessed intelligence from multiple sources to all mission elements, enabling all elements to focus on the broader mission mandate rather than on sectarian objectives.

Figure 3
Functional process of a multidisciplinary Joint Mission Analysis Cell



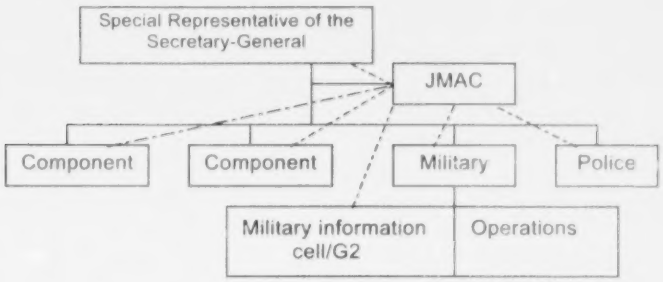
B. Joint Mission Analysis Cells and military information cells have complementary but distinct roles

16. OIOS noted that daily ground patrols and reconnaissance by United Nations military observers and military liaison officers were the most common means of gathering information in peacekeeping operations. United Nations military observers usually collect diverse information not limited to security issues. In UNMIL, for example, United Nations military observers and military liaison officers collect the bulk of the information used in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, while they provide much of the information on humanitarian needs in UNMIS. However, even the best-trained, most aware observers are limited in the quantity and quality of information they can gather. The flood of data they report may be ambiguous and contradictory and require some review to detect any patterns, discrepancies, consistency and relevance. While the observers may be able to do some basic analysis of the information, they are usually too close to the situation to see the big picture and a military information cell G2 branch is required at the force headquarters to do comprehensive analysis.

17. In contrast, although other mission elements may have a limited capacity for collection, their need for specific and targeted information is not as imperative as that of the Force and, consequently, they have no need for a dedicated and independent analysis cell. What they often lack is a capacity to integrate relevant information from all sources to develop strategic assessments, which can be functionally accomplished by a JMAC. OIOS therefore recognizes the complementary roles of JMAC and the force G2 branch while acknowledging that,

by itself, JMAC cannot cater to the operational level information requirements of the Force. In the opinion of OIOS, the ideal relationship of JMAC to other mission elements, including the Force, should be as illustrated in figure 4.

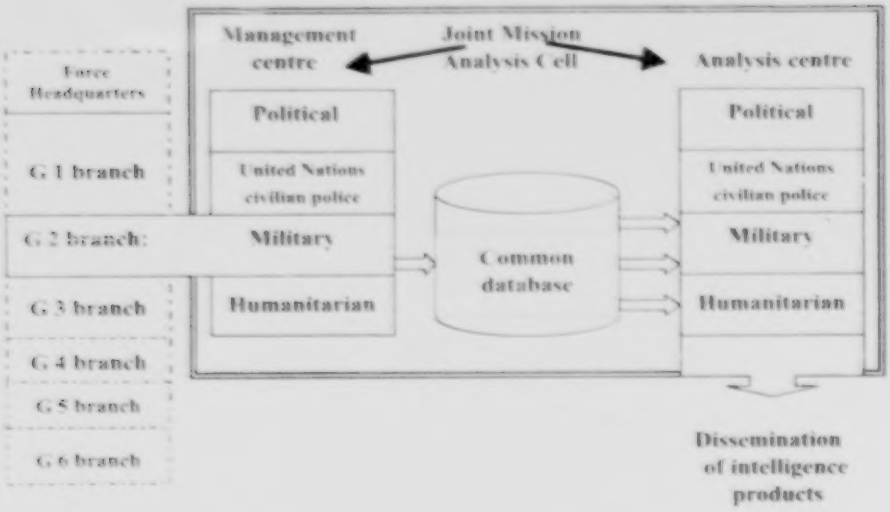
Figure 4
Ideal structure for information management: information flows



18. However, as clearly indicated by the data in table 1, the JMAC in many missions is largely a military cell. The current structure in UNMIS provides an interesting case study on the mutation of JMAC. When it was first established, it was headed by the chief of the force G2 branch and was called JMAC. The force G2 branch effectively ceased to exist when all staff were transferred and working under the ambit of JMAC, although it did not have any civilian personnel. Consequently, the mission found that the output of JMAC had a high security bias and a decision was made to rename it a "Unified Mission Analysis Cell", in order to accommodate civilian personnel. However, this move precipitated the reversion of the force to the G2 branch to focus specifically on tactical and operational level information requirements, while the Unified Mission Analysis Cell focused on strategic information.

19. In the opinion of OIOS, JMACs cannot fully substitute for the role of the force G2 branch. While JMAC can provide integrated strategic information, operational (brigade/sector) and tactical (battalion) level commanders also need specific local information to support their operations. For example, information on the profiles of local belligerent commanders, local troop dispositions and movements and road conditions may prove too detailed to be coordinated at the level of JMAC, especially in missions covering vast territory, such as MONUC and UNMIS. For this reason, OIOS sees merit in the force retaining its G2 branch while at the same time maintaining representation in JMAC for processing strategic information. These military staff in JMAC will therefore have a dual reporting line — to the head of JMAC on substantive matters and to the Chief of the G2 branch on administrative matters, because they will remain on the military staff. OIOS thus considers the architecture depicted in figure 5 to be the optimal interface between JMAC and the force G2 branch.

Figure 5
Interface between the Joint Mission Analysis Cell and the force G2 branch



C. Staff often lacks capacity for effective information management

20. OIOS observed that in most peacekeeping operations the existing staff functions at force headquarters did not have any specific order of battle, knowledge, experience or adequate skills for using the products of overt information management for tactical and strategic purposes. OIOS believes that relevant staff should be given adequate skills training in information management upon deployment to the mission. Regarding the main functional areas/branches in force headquarters, OIOS noted the following:

- Operations (G3). This branch focuses strictly on placing munitions on target, positioning troops and planning movements. It usually does not have the concept, doctrine or the order of battle to use information as a substitute for munitions or manpower. For example, OIOS could not establish how or whether the operations branch took into account the impact of "hearts and minds" activities in the overall design of operations.

- Military information (G2). This branch is usually reactive and heavily reliant on secondary information. It does not have the concept or security permission to go out and acquire open-source intelligence with which to provide direct support to mission operations. For example, in MONUC, the G2 staff did not have access to even basic public media such as satellite television, newspapers or magazines, which are all useful sources of information.

- Force communications (G6). Mission communications remains the responsibility of the Communication Information Technology System (a United Nations civilian set-up); force G6 mainly focuses on the administration of bandwidth, the assignment of HF/VHF communications and oversight of the

architecture and resources. It does not have responsibility for setting aside resources to facilitate the collection of information from the local population or belligerents, for example, to provide discrete and secure means for anonymous sources to pass on information or hotlines for whistle-blowers. OIOS believes that force G6 can contribute effectively to the open-source intelligence effort if closely aligned with the mission JMAC and the communication information technology system.

- Planning section (G2/G3). This section is usually not held accountable for declaring specific plans to be unsupportable owing to lack of intelligence or even operational maps. Most mission contingency plans have made no provision for acquiring the necessary open-source intelligence, including commercial imagery, perhaps because it is assumed that there is no capability for its analysis and interpretation.

21. In the opinion of OIOS, the reluctance of the United Nations to acknowledge intelligence operations as an operational and strategic resource has limited the staff functions to their most basic and generic tasks. This prevents key mission staff from employing intelligence as a vital component and virtual substitute for the use of force, manpower and time. The situation calls for reviewing the peacekeeping policy to strengthen staff functions through providing current, comprehensive and actionable information on a daily basis.

22. OIOS observed that in some peacekeeping operations the daily joint briefings at headquarters by the force G2 branch were mere recitals of incident reports without additional analysis. As a result, civilian staff in UNMIS had stopped attending those briefings, regarding them as tactical operational briefings with no added value for them. OIOS also observed that information management personnel, whether employed in JMAC or the force G2 branch, do not have the relevant training and skills for their posts, most being appointed merely on the basis of their performance and proficiency in other sections.

23. It was noted that the requisite level of staff skill and expertise can be obtained through the recruitment of trained and qualified information management specialists from Member States and further perfected by in-mission training. While the recruitment of military staff will have to be based on the qualifications and experience stipulated in the job descriptions by the military division to the troop-contributing countries, the recruitment of civilian personnel could be done through open advertisement targeting information management specialists with intelligence backgrounds in different areas. In-mission training of personnel appointed to the JMAC and force G2 branch should be standardized and based on a syllabus to be developed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

D. Public information could be of value to Joint Mission Analysis Cells

24. Every mission has a public information officer (PIO) who functions as the mission spokesperson and provides a link between the mission and the international and local media. The PIO, through interaction with the media, has the potential of obtaining information of value to the mission. However, OIOS noted that there were no institutional mechanisms in peacekeeping operations to facilitate the sharing of such information with other elements of the mission. PIOs are not included in the

JMAC structure and consequently JMAC has a limited capacity to influence the information that the PIO provides to the public. OIOS believes that there should be more synergy between JMAC and PIO functions. As the locus for information management, JMAC should be the logical place for the PIO to synthesize the communication message to portray a positive image of the mission as well as its challenges and accomplishments. While it is not necessary to have public information personnel working directly in JMAC, there should be clear guidance on integrating public information into the overall mission information environment.

25. OIOS noted an overlap between the functions of a PIO and a military public information officer (MPIO). Clear guidelines and policy directives (which are currently lacking from peacekeeping operations' standard operating procedures) on the role of MPIOs and how it relates to PIOs could certainly help to foster coordination and teamwork between them. The pertinence of such institutional guidance was highlighted by instances of disconnect and miscommunication between MPIOs and PIOs that OIOS observed in some peacekeeping operations. This lack of coherence in public information results in missed opportunities for the success of the mission.

E. Effective information operations can contribute to security

26. OIOS noted that all missions run campaigns to win the "hearts and minds" of the local population and to foster support for the peacekeeping operation. For such campaigns to be fully effective, they require a deliberate and concerted effort to publicize them. Goodwill so engendered will have a tangible impact on the security of peacekeepers and can be a factor in shifting the balance of influence from belligerent forces to the peacekeeping force. OIOS observed the need for more energetic and coordinated efforts in communicating accomplishments and enhancing the visibility of activities — of the peacekeeping operation as a whole and of its military component — benefiting the local population.

27. Printed publications are widely used as a tool for information outreach by peacekeeping operations, including monthly magazines targeted at the general population. OIOS noted in particular that UNMEE produces a mission calendar and involves the communities — particularly the youth and students — in developing pictorial designs depicting their aspirations for peace. By harnessing the talent of the local population in the design of the peace message, the mission is able to deliver its message in the context of the local culture and values. Similarly, the UNMIL focus serves as an outlet for informing the Liberian population of the most important activities of the mission and its assessment of political and humanitarian developments. OIOS considers these as best practices that should be shared with and emulated by other missions.

28. OIOS noted the effective use of radio broadcasts in some peacekeeping operations. Radio broadcasts providing entertainment and information on mission operations are very effective in diffusing volatile situations that may trigger outbreaks of violence. Such broadcasts can reach different factions and communities simultaneously. Regrettably, not all peacekeeping operations have the capacity to broadcast. ONUB, for example, does not have a radio station and does not do any broadcasting. OIOS recalls that a mission does not need to have an independent radio station in order for it to broadcast. For example, UNMEE does not have its

own radio station but buys air time through various arrangements with the local radio stations. Both radio broadcasts and printed publications are effective media for information operations in mobilizing public support for peacekeeping, and all peacekeeping operations should have this capacity.

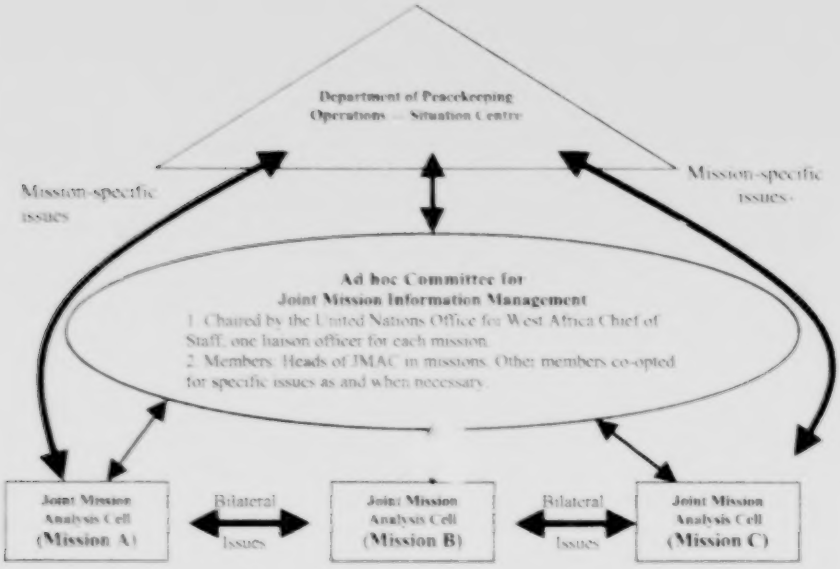
F. Troop-contributing countries can contribute effectively to operational level information in missions

29. OIOS recognizes that Member States and, in particular troop-contributing countries have a compelling interest in ensuring the security of United Nations peacekeepers. Member States may want to provide peacekeepers with information directly, bypassing the peacekeeping operation leadership and often do so. However, given the very broad and diverse national composition of most peacekeeping operation forces, such practices could result in confusion and information overload. OIOS believes that whatever information needs are provided by troop-contributing countries should be channelled through the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at Headquarters — as shown in figure 2 — for transmission to the mission through its JMAC. Ideally, troop-contributing countries can contribute effectively by providing strategic information directly to the Department, for instance, by identifying arms dealers who supply the belligerents with arms and ammunition, the role of neighbouring States in the conflict and any alliances between different armed groups. While such information is critical for strategic decision-making at the Headquarters level — for example, for imposing sanctions against States — its value may be limited at the operational and tactical levels of the mission. However, formal mechanisms should be in place to allow for exceptions when troop-contributing countries with operational or tactically significant information, such as that pertaining to security, may communicate directly to the head of mission or Force Commander in order to streamline the information loop.

IV. Inter-mission information flow and management

30. The United Nations has long recognized the importance of inter-mission cooperation between missions operating in the same region. In his report to the Security Council (S/2005/135), the Secretary-General identified a number of possible areas of inter-mission cooperation and cross-border activities, including cross-border liaison and information-sharing by United Nations military observers, and the possible establishment of a regional JMAC for the three missions in West Africa. The Secretary-General also proposed the establishment of an inter-mission working group to include representatives of political affairs, the military, civil affairs, civilian police, humanitarian affairs and human rights. OIOS is aware that these three missions — UNAMSIL, UNMIL and UNOCI — have had problems of cross-border movement of armed combatants and civilians attracted by the reintegration opportunities offered in neighbouring countries and notes that the United Nations has a subregional office in West Africa, the United Nations Office for West Africa. In the opinion of OIOS, the structure for information management in regions with a regional office can work as shown in figure 6.

Figure 6
Suggested architecture for inter-mission information sharing (example for the United Nations Office for West Africa


Department of Peacekeeping Operations — Situation Centre
Mission-specific issues
Mission-specific issues
Ad hoc Committee for Joint Mission Information Management
1. Chaired by the United Nations Office for West Africa Chief of Staff, one liaison officer for each mission.
2. Members: Heads of JMAC in missions. Other members co-opted for specific issues as and when necessary.
Joint Mission Analysis Cell (Mission A)
Bilateral Issues
Joint Mission Analysis Cell (Mission B)
Bilateral Issues
Joint Mission Analysis Cell (Mission C)

31. However, OIOS noted that not all regions have regional offices such as the United Nations Office for West Africa, and establishing a regional JMAC as shown in figure 6 in such regions may actually be counterproductive, as it would provide a decision-support infrastructure without the attendant decision-making authority. Since every mission has full autonomy for its decisions and only requires due regard to the influence of regional events on its activities and operations, this can be adequately and effectively achieved through the sharing of reports and information analyses, and perhaps an exchange of liaison officers. The role played by the United Nations Office for West Africa can easily be taken up at the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at Headquarters if enough capacity is developed within the Situation Centre or Current Military Operations Service to backstop information support for those missions without a regional coordination centre.

V. Backstopping support for information management

A. The capacity of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for backstopping information management is fragmented

32. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations is meant to provide strategic guidance to field missions, but not to give operational level directives. The heads of mission and Force Commanders have authority to make decisions and direct operations in their respective mission areas. Nevertheless, they depend on Headquarters for different types of information support and guidance from time to

time. For example, they may require strategic information pertaining to the political situation prior to the involvement of the United Nations or may wish to anticipate the political stance and moves of Governments and factions involved in the conflict, especially where there is a looming threat of violence. As there is no single focal point in the Department from which to obtain this information, OIOS observed that missions develop their own personal networks in different parts of United Nations Headquarters and relevant agencies.

33. In the opinion of OIOS, field missions should not have to rely on personal networking to obtain information. They should be provided with all relevant information, especially in the critical early months when the mission is working towards full deployment and coping with unforeseen crises. To ensure consistency and continuity in the event of changes in staff and personalities, OIOS considers the establishment of institutional mechanisms at Headquarters crucial for backstopping field missions. Such institutional capacity could be developed either in the Situation Centre or Current Military Operations Service by strengthening their capabilities in monitoring and assessing trends in conflict regions. Also, as previously mentioned, in the absence of a regional centre such as the United Nations Office for Western Africa, this capacity would enable the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to provide information support to missions in the same region on common issues affecting that region.

B. Missions are vulnerable in the deployment phase

34. OIOS gleaned from responses to its survey that in the deployment phase, when missions were highly vulnerable, insufficient information was available to support decision-making and many of the decisions were reactive owing to this lack of information. In the case of UNMIS, OIOS noted a critical shortage of information in its set-up and deployment phases. Recognizing that setting up an effective information management system takes time, OIOS noted that the overarching tasks for information management in this phase include predicting potential crisis situations inside the mission area, developing the proper perspective on the events taking place in the mission and determining the level of threat against the force and the mission. This is not an easy task, in that this information has to be collected against various odds, including movement restrictions, and from sources whose credibility is not yet established.

35. It should be emphasized that the challenges for information management are much more critical when the mission is working towards full deployment. The mission must create its own order of battle information and tactical templates for the different warring factions; these templates take considerable time and skill to develop. In this phase, missions need greater support from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. During mission set-up and deployment, missions could be issued a standard package containing sample copies of draft standard operating procedures, templates and documentation for use in information collection and analysis. OIOS also noted that it took a long time for peacekeeping operations to develop an effective information database. In fact, even established missions such as MONUC are still grappling with developing an information database. However, OIOS is aware that database systems are widely available on the open market. As these commercial databases only require minor modifications, they could be acquired and provided to the established and new missions in the set-up phase to

facilitate the establishment of their information management systems. The Member States and troop-contributing countries with well-developed information capacities can play a significant role in information management during the set-up phase, such as by providing cartographic and other specialized technical support.

VI. Promoting organizational learning and best practices

36. OIOS commends the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for establishing an extensive library hosted by the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, which includes studies on lessons learned, discussion and policy papers and reports organized by topic, mission or region. However, OIOS noted that this resource is not well known in the field. Over 40 per cent of respondents to an OIOS survey had no access to lessons learned from their missions, while only 30 per cent had access. This needs to be corrected.

37. OIOS believes that the training and advisory group of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should facilitate the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned in the information management area. These lessons may then be used to modify in-mission and induction training curriculum for new staff deploying to JMAC or the force G2 branch.

38. OIOS is concerned that about 80 per cent of respondents to its survey maintained that there were no established best practices for information management and that they were not aware of their missions applying any best practices in information management. This may be partly because the concept of JMAC is a fairly recent phenomenon. There are many best practices in information management identified by researchers and practitioners at various national defence institutions drawing from their own doctrine and experiences in peacekeeping, which can be obtained from a search of the Internet. In order to facilitate an easy and speedy search and to ensure that only the most relevant best practices and lessons learned are accessed by staff, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations may review these websites and publicize its selections on the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit website.

VII. Use of information management technology

A. Overt information technology is effective and impartial

39. Unless the mission has a good idea of what is actually happening on the ground, it will find that its role as an impartial monitor may be compromised. With the increased complexity of operations and sophistication of belligerents, the United Nations should make use of all neutral technology in the collection and analysis of information, keeping in mind that a sound and neutral assessment is required. For example, techniques such as crater analysis may be employed without threatening any of the parties to the conflict. OIOS noted that other forms of information gathering technology have been used in various missions in the past. In 1962, the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) established a radio-monitoring system that used a commercial receiver for radio message interception and successfully used aerial reconnaissance. More recently, OIOS noted that aircraft were used to collect aerial surveillance information by the United Nations

Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG), the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

40. Figure 7[1] illustrates the spectrum of information-gathering activities. On the left are non-threatening activities and on the right are controversial activities, which are sensitive and generally associated with covert or clandestine operations. In the opinion of OIOS, any technology that can be applied within the sphere of non-controversial activities should be acceptable and national contingents should be encouraged to bring this into the mission area. However, all collection activities, even those in the "permitted" category, such as the use of sensors and visual observation, have to be specifically agreed upon with the conflicting parties, or at least the host State.

Figure 7
Information-gathering spectrum

Permitted	*Questionable*	*Prohibited*
Visual observation		
Observed from fixed posts	Observation out of mission area	– Observers concealed
Observation from vehicles		– Observers camouflaged
Observation from aircraft		– Use of sting operation
Sensors		
Visible (video); infrared; radar ground sensors	X-ray; satellite	– Use of discovered or captured devices
Human communications		
United Nations personnel: clearly identified informants; unpaid	Unidentified personnel; rewarded; radio message intercepts	Undercover/disguised
		Paid (agents)
		Wire/telephone tapping
Documents		
Public	Private; confidential	Stolen

41. OIOS noted that the technology available to peacekeeping operations for information management is outdated and lags far behind the technology now being used by many of the national armies of troop-contributing countries. Three options for providing the technology to missions may be considered: (a) to lease the technology from commercial surveillance contractors; (b) to purchase the

[1] Published in Pearson Papers Number 4, "The Cloak and the Blue Beret: The Limits of Intelligence-Gathering in United Nations Peacekeeping", A. Walter Dorn; Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Center, 1999.

technology and provide it to contingents as United Nations owned equipment on issue on a loan basis; and (c) to use the contingent-owned equipment mechanism and reimburse troop-contributing countries for the use of equipment. Any of these methods may be considered depending on the nature of the mission.

42. Currently, peacekeeping operations do not have the capability to perform and produce geographical analysis or terrain analysis or to manage digital/analog geographic data. These products should support assessed intelligence and be client-oriented, focused on facilitating the commander's decision. The effectiveness of information management can be measured by the type and quality of products that are made available to the military commander. Format, content and timeliness are some of the most relevant factors that should be taken into consideration when building up new output products to support the decision-making process. These assessments should be easy readable, understandable and provided in a suitable format. A Geographic Information System is a powerful tool capable of gathering and producing such military information products, requiring a whole set of data such as satellite imagery and military geographical data. This system should be operated in JMAC with the direct collaboration of the force G2 branch. Troop-contributing countries should be requested to provide such capability by including specific necessities in the missions' force requirements.

B. Electronic monitoring and countermeasures are indispensable

43. In missions with a Chapter VII mandate, where the peacekeeping force may be involved in low-intensity operations, such as mediating outbreaks of violence between belligerents or containing incidents of public disorder and rioting, advance information on belligerents' intentions and the identification of potential trouble areas are critical. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, at the end of June 2005, MONUC was concerned that the rhetoric and actions of some of the political parties could lead to violent demonstrations and heightened tensions at the beginning of the six-month extension of the transitional Government's term. The mission noted that its primary method of communication was by either cellular or land-based telephone systems and a capability for intercepting such communications would have been immensely helpful by enabling the force to increase its presence in the trouble spots and thereby deterring would-be spoilers from carrying out acts of disturbance. While this strategy might appear to be not entirely in line with the principle outlined in figure 7, OIOS emphasizes that, there is no tapping into telephone lines involved and the intercepted information is transmitted through technically open radio channels. OIOS recalled that in the past, the United Nations has authorized such operations.[2] Although this should be an exception rather than the rule, OIOS believes that where the peacekeeping operation faces serious risk to its personnel, particularly when it is under a Chapter VII mandate, special dispensation should be considered to allow electronic monitoring and countermeasures for protection purposes.

[2] In 1962, the Secretary-General's Military Adviser agreed to the establishment of a broad radio monitoring organization for the military information branch in ONUC for intercepting radio messages using a commercial receiver. Messages were intercepted whereby ONUC learned of orders issued by Katangese authorities for bombardment and reconnaissance missions as well as hidden arms caches.

44. According to one senior military commander, commanders want hard facts, not guesses from their military information officers. Where the situation warrants it, the interception and deciphering of open electronic communications should be part of the mission communication tasks. Closely linked to this, the technological revolution in global communications in recent years also means that belligerents have access to communication monitoring and jamming systems. Peacekeeping operations, particularly those operating under a Chapter VII mandate, should therefore have the capability for electronic countermeasures to prevent any of the conflicting parties from frustrating mission communications and gaining dominance in the mission zone. However, as previously noted, it should require specific consent particularly from the host State and, at the very least, should ensure that all parties are aware of the use of these electronic operations to keep them transparent.

C. Field missions lack comprehensive information security

45. OIOS observed that the system for information security needs improvement in peacekeeping operations. In UNMIS, for example, OIOS observed that the Mission had no policy guidelines on information technology usage; templates were not used to assign access rights to users; and access to server rooms was not controlled. In emphasizing this laxity in information security, one respondent pointed out that the mission line communications had no numbering plan to control its usage, noting that if a bomb were to go off, nobody would be able to call the Mission because all the lines would be busy with everyone calling their families. Observations on information security were made by different staff, but there was no one place where all such concerns were consolidated and acted upon. In the opinion of OIOS, the information security plan should be integrated into the overall mission security plan.

VIII. Conclusion

46. The role of information management in enhancing security and ensuring mission accomplishment is widely acknowledged, particularly in complex, multidimensional peacekeeping, in which the consent of all parties is not always guaranteed and missions are involved in a variety of peace enforcement actions. To foster an enabling environment for field missions to manage information effectively, the United Nations should acknowledge and encourage the use of open-source intelligence. The requirement for credible and timely information spans all levels of decision-making, including at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. In order to ensure that the mission is capable of operating in a coherent manner, based on a common interpretation and analysis of issues affecting the mandate, there is a need for joint management of information. The military component should play a significant role in joint information management to provide the mission with integrated strategic analysis. However, to be effective in its own role, the military should maintain an independent capability focused specifically on providing operational and tactical level information support to the force.

IX. Recommendations

47. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should establish an integrated information management system such as a JMAC in all multidimensional peacekeeping operations. The architecture, including the size and composition, may vary depending on the mandate, size and structure of the mission (paras. 8-10) (SP-05-001-001).

48. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should develop strategic guidance, relevant policies and guidelines for JMACs and promulgate these policies and guidelines system-wide for uniform application. The guidance should be embodied in the Special Representative of the Secretary-General force directives (paras. 12-15) (SP-05-001-002).

49. The function and role of a JMAC should be distinct from that of the military information cell/force G2 branch as a mission-level asset for strategic information support (paras. 16-19) (SP-05-001-003).

50. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should review the field policy and provide guidance to peacekeeping operations for developing a specific order of battle and standard operating procedures that enable all staff branches to play a significant role in the information management cycle (paras. 20-21) (SP-05-001-004).

51. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should develop clear guidelines for the recruitment and selection of civilian and military staff to positions in JMAC and the force G2 branch. A standardized training module should be developed for in-mission training of force G2 branch and JMAC personnel in information management (paras. 22-23) (SP-05-001-005).

52. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should provide clear guidance to missions on the interface between the JMAC and public information officer in the framework of mission information management to produce a coordinated and mutually supportive outcome (para. 24) (SP-05-001-006).

53. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should develop guidelines to integrate the functions of the military public information officer with the public information officer clearly outlining separation of responsibilities and authority levels (para. 25) (SP-05-001-007).

54. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should provide field missions with the requisite human, technical and financial resources for producing printed publications and radio broadcasts to bolster the mission's public information outreach and generate goodwill for its operations. Missions' force requirements and information operations standard operating procedures should also be reviewed to include this capability (paras. 26-28) (SP-05-001-008).

55. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should institutionalize mechanisms for troop-contributing countries to communicate any vital information inputs that can impact operational decisions at mission level in a specific and targeted manner (para. 29) (SP-05-001-009).

56. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should issue directives and guidelines for establishing and operating joint mission information management

committees in regions where there is a United Nations regional office for information-sharing between field missions (paras. 30-31) (SP-05-001-010).

57. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should develop an institutional capacity for backstopping field missions by strengthening the monitoring and assessment capacity in the Situation Centre, or the Current Military Operations Service (paras. 32-33) (SP-05-001-011).

58. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should develop mission-tailored packages containing various templates, draft standard operating procedures, standard database formats and sample documents on information management for issue to new missions during the set-up and deployment phases (paras. 34-35) (SP-05-001-012).

59. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should develop a compendium of best practices and lessons learned in information management, making them widely available to all missions and using them as a basis for standard operating procedures and in-mission induction training (paras. 36-38) (SP-05-001-013).

60. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should develop an appropriate policy for providing technological support for information collection and for enhancing mission capacity for information analysis and synthesis (paras. 39-41) (SP-05-001-014).

61. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should consider, when establishing specific mission force requirements, the provision of a capability to perform and produce geographical analysis and terrain analysis and manage digital/analog geographic data (para. 42) (SP-05-001-015).

62. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should review policies on communications monitoring and electronic countermeasures to enhance security and improve mission preparedness to deal with unexpected situations (paras. 43-44) (SP-05-001-016).